

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINR, PINT, FR
SUBJECT: JACQUES BLANC -- NEW SECRETARY GENERAL OF
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY (PR)

1. AS HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED, THE PR POLITICAL BUREAU ELECTED JACQUES BLANC TO REPLACE JEAN-PIERRE SOISSON AS SECRETARY GENERAL. SOISSON RESIGNED AFTER HIS APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER OF YOUTH, SPORTS AND TOURISM. BLANC, 38, ATTENDED THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE AT TOULOUSE AND IS A NEUROPSYCHIATRIST SPECIALIZING IN THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED. HE BEGAN HIS POLITICAL CAREER IN 1970 WHEN HE WAS ELECTED A GENERAL COUNCILLOR OF LOZERE, AND LATER, MAYOR OF LA CALOURGUE IN 1971. HE WAS ELECTED DEPUTY FROM LOZERE IN 1973 AND REELECTED IN 1978. IN 1974, BLANC ENTERED THE POLITICAL SECRETARIAT OF THE INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN PARTY (NOW PR), AND SOON AFTER BECAME ITS NATIONAL SECRETARY IN CHARGE OF ORGANIZATION. IN JANUARY 1977, HE WAS NAMED BY THE PRESIDENT TO PRE-

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PAGE 02 PARIS 12760 191732Z

PARE A SPECIAL REPORT ON TOURISM. THE FOLLOWING APRIL, HE WAS NAMED SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE.

2. JACQUES BLANC IS CONSIDERED THE PROTOTYPE OF THE NEW YOUNG GISCARDIAN -- OPEN, REFORMIST, ACTIVIST, WITHOUT COMPLEXES TOWARD THE MORE NUMEROUS GAULLISTS AND TOTALLY COMMITTED TO GISCARD. BLANC PERSONALLY IS

ANIMATED, ATHLETIC, AGGRESSIVE, RATHER IMPETUOUS AND HIGHLY CAPABLE. HIS APPOINTMENT IS AIMED AT APPEALING TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION WHICH INCREASINGLY DOMINATES THE PARTY'S ORGANIZATION.

3. BLANC'S ELECTION AS SECRETARY GENERAL MUST BE APPROVED BY THE PR CONGRESS TO BE HELD MAY 19-20 AT FREJUS (CELEBRATING ITS FIRST BIRTHDAY AT ITS BIRTH PLACE). THE CONGRESS WILL ALSO DEAL WITH THE QUESTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PR TO THE UDF -- A SUBJECT WHICH HAS CAUSED PROBLEMS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. LOCAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE STRONGLY OBJECTED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEPARATE UDF ORGANIZATION IN EACH VOTING DISTRICT (PARTICULARLY THOSE IN WHICH THE PR DOMINATES ITS UDF PARTNERS), WHICH WOULD BE COMPETING FOR FUNDS AND MILITANTS. THE LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS PREFER THAT THE UDF ORGANIZATION STOP AT THE DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL, LEAVING THEM A FREE HAND IN THE INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PR HAS EMPHASIZED THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UDF AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL WOULD PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO RECRUIT MILITANTS FOR GISCARD WHO WOULD NOT NORMALLY JOIN MAJORITY (OR ANY) POLITICAL PARTIES. IT WILL BE UP TO BLANC TO SELL THE PARTY LEADERSHIP'S (MAINLY GISCARD'S) POSITION TO THE PR ORGANIZATION. WHILE NOT A SERIOUS PROBLEM, UNTIL THIS QUESTION OF TACTICS IS RESOLVED, BLANC'S EFFORTS WILL BE MAINLY CONFINED TO OFFICIAL USE

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NED TO PICKING HIS TEAM AND CONTINUING SOISSON'S EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THE PR'S HEADQUARTERS ORGANIZATION. HARTMAN

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